

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

DHA-02 EUR-12 EA-07 PM-04 SP-02 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 USIA-06 DODE-00 EB-07 AID-05 IGA-02 SY-05

SCCT-01 /081 W

----- 037496

R 271830Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7958

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY OUAGDOUGOU

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 COTONOU 1971

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC, CPRS, PINS, TO, DM

SUBJ: ALLEGED DETENTION OF US CITIZENS IN NORTHERN BENIN

REF A. NIAMEY 4923 B. COTONOU 1966 C. ACCRA 8513 D. STATE 300747

E. COTONOU 1950 F. STATE 300249 G. COTONOU 1947 H. LOME 2808

SUMMARY: FLAWS IN "S.O.S NOTE", DELIVERED BY SELF-STYLED
"CAR CITIZEN" TO EMBASSY LOME ALLEGING DETENTION OF USCITS
IN NORTHERN BENIN, ESTABLISH CONCLUSIVELY THAT THE CASE IS A
FRAUD. PRESENT MESSAGE TRANSMITS TEXT OF NOTE, OUR
CRITICISM OF TEXT AND OUR COMMENTARY RE THIS CONSPIRACY TO
INCITE A CONFRONTATION BETWEEN USG AND PRB. END SUMMARY.

1. WE HAVE EXAMINED "S.O.S. NOTE" DELIVERED TO EMBASSY LOME
BY SELF-STYLED " CAR CITIZEN" ON DEC 20 (REF H) AND RECEIVED
HERE BY POUCH DEC 24. IT IS CLEARLY FRAUDULENT.

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2. NOTE IS ON SMALL PIECE OF NOTEBOOK PAPER. TEXT, WITH PUN-

CTUATION PRODUCED EXACTLY, IS AS FOLLOWS: "S.O.S (CAPTION). WE ARE DETAINED IN A CAMP, NEAR DJOUGOU, BENIN (DAHOMEY); OFFICIALLY FOR ESPIONAGE. 3 US AND 1 DUTCH NATIONALS: RALPH K. FEENEY, REPORTER; OLIVER J. RASKIN, STUDENT; PAUL V.D. BROEK, STUDENT, AND JOHN W. DOTSON (M.D.)

- LAST CONTACT: US CONSULATE, KADUNA (NIGERIA) 27-11-75.

- HEALTH PROBLEMS (AMOEBOIC DYSENTERY)

- PLEASE CONTACT FOR:

MR. RALPH FEENEY: HERALD EXAMINER 1111 SOUTH BROADWAY,
LOS ANGELES, CALIF

OLIVIER RASKIN: MR JAMES RACKINS: 12487 BEATRICE ST., LOS
ANGELES, CALIF

PAUL VAN D BROEK: MR. JOHANNES VAN DER BROEK OOSTERBLOKKER
96, BLOKKER NETHERLANDS.

DR. JOHN DOTSON: MRS ANN DOTSON 451 FULLERTON AVENUE,
ELMHUST 111.

FOR DETAILS, WE HOPE OUR FRIEND LEOPOLD BANIO (OR BANJU)
WILL GIVE YOU SOME; WE ARE DENIED CONTACT WITH US REPRESENT-
ATIVES.

THANKS AND MERRY CHRISTMAS* (SIGNED) DR. J.W. DOTSON. DECEMBER
15, 1975."

3. AMONG THE MANY FLAWS IN THE NOTE ARE THE FOLLOWING
THIRTEEN:

A. CALLIGRAPHY IS HAND-PRINTING IN A FRENCH MODE. IN NO WAY
DO THE LETTERS RESEMBLE ANY AMERICAN STYLE OF HAND PRINTING.

B. NOTE CONTAINS THREE CROSSED "SEVENS", WHICH ARE USED BY
PERSONS EDUCATED IN ROMANCE LANGUAGE COUNTRIES.

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C. THE NAME "RASKIN" IS SPELLED "RACKINS" THREE WORDS LATTER.

D. THE CHRISTIAN NAME OF RASKIN IS GIVEN ONE PLACE AS
"OLIVER" AND IN ANOTHER AS "OLIVIER." THE LATTER IS THE FRENCH
SPELLING OF THE NAME.

E. YOUNG MAN IN TORSO PHOTOGRAPH ALSO DELIVERED BY THE
"CAR CITIZEN" LOOKS LIKE A EUROPEAN (DUTCH, GERMAN). ON BACK

OF PHOTO THE NAME "OLIVIER RASKIN" IS HANDPRINTED IN FRENCH-TYPE LETTERS.

F. DATE GIVEN FOR "LAST CONTACT" AT KADUNA IS 27-11-75
(WHEREAS AN AMERICAN NORMALLY WOULD WRITE IT 11-27-75) AT
END OF LETTER HOWEVER THE DATE ORDER IS DIFFERENT:
DEC 15, 1975.

G. ELMHURST, ILLINOIS IS SPELLED: "ELMHUST", I.E. WITHOUT
THE "R". THIS BY THE WAY IS THE ADDRESS GIVEN FOR DOTSON,
THE ALLEGED DRAFTSMAN AND SIGNATORY OF THE NOTE.

H. THE WORD "NATIONALS" IS DIVIDED AT THE END OF A LINE AS
"NATIO" AND "NALS" (WHICH WOULD BE INCORRECT SYLLABIC DIVISION
IN ENGLISH BUT CORRECT DIVISION IN FRENCH AND OTHER LANGUAGES).

I. SECOND TIME FEENEY'S NAME IS MENTIONED, WRITER FIRST
SPELLED IT "FEENY", THEN CROSSED OVER THE "Y" TO MAKE IT
READ "FEENEY".

J. LAST LETTER OF NOTE-BEARER'S SURNAME IS WRITTEN OVER
("O" OVER "U" OR VICE VERSA), PERHAPS INTENTIONALLY TO GARBLE
IT.

K. THE NOTE, WHICH IS SIGNED BY "DR" DOTSON WHO EARLIER DES-CRIBES HIMSELF AS AN M.D., STATES THAT THE MEN HAVE "AMOEBOIC" DYSENTERY. WE UNDERSTAND THAT EVEN A PHYSICIAN CANNOT TELL WHETHER THE AFFLICTION IS "AMOEBOIC" OR "BACILLARY" WITHOUT A LAB TEST.

L. DOTSON SIGNATURE IS IN GRANDIOSE FRENCH STYLE.

M. OVERALL PRESENTATION OF CASE IN NOTE STRIKES US AS NOT
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AMERICAN IN STYLE BUT THE PRODUCE OF A MIND ACCUSTOMED TO THINKING IN FRENCH AS FIRST OR SECOND LANGUAGE.

4. TAKEN INDIVIDUALLY, SOME OF THE ABOVE FLAWS WOULD NOT NORMALLY BE TAKEN VERY SERIOUSLY, BUT WHEN VIEWED WITH OTHER DEFECTS IN THE NOTE AND WITH OTHER ASPECTS OF THE CASE (I.E. INABILITY TO ESTABLISH THAT PERSONS ALLEGEDLY UNDER ARREST ACTUALLY EXIST), MAY BE CONSIDERED CUMULATIVELY AS CORROBORATIVE OF FRAUD.

5. FOR NIAMEY: APPRECIATE YOUR RESOURCEFULNESS REFLECTED REF
A. WE ARE DEVISING PLANS FOR FURTHER TRAVEL BY EMBOFFS
IN NORTHERN BENIN, IF NECESSARY ON A SYSTEMATIC PERIODIC BASIS.
FIRST ZONE TO BE COVERED WILL BE THE STRETCH BETWEEN PARAKOU AND MALANVILLE. IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT THE ANGOLPHONES REFERRED

TO IN REF A ARE THE TOGO-BOUND ARAB WELDERS REPORTEDLY
ARRESTED IN COTONOU IN AUG AND TAKEN TO PARAKOU WHERE THEY
ARE STILL RUMORED TO BE IN DETENTION (COTONOU 1588). WE RE-
PEATING REF B AND E TO YOU FOR YOUR INFO.
ENGLE

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PRS-01 USIA-06 DODE-00 EB-07 AID-05 IGA-02 SY-05

SCCT-01 /081 W
----- 037517

R 281830Z DEC 75
FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7959
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
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AMEMBASSY LOME
AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
AMEMBASSY OUAGDOUGOU

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 COTONOU 1971

6. COMMENT: AFTER DISCUSSION WITHIN COUNTRY TEAM WE HAVE EXPANDED
LIST OF SUSPECTED POTENTIAL CONSPIRATORS IN THIS CASE TO FOUR,
ARRANGED IN DESCENDING ORDER OF PLAUSIBILITY: (A) THE EXILE
FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION AND REHABILITATION OF DAHOMEY
(FLRD), B) THE SOVIETS OR NORTH KOREANS, C) ELEMENTS IN THE
EXTREME LEFT-WING FACTION IN THE PRB GOVT, AND D) A PRANK-
STER, A NUT OR PERSON/PERSONS WITH A GRIEVANCE AGAINST USG
OR PRB THAT WE ARE PRESENTLY UNAWARE OF.

7. SINCE PROSPECTS OF CRACKING THE KEREKOU POLICE REGIME'S
HOLD ON THE COUNTRY BY INSURRECTION OR INVADING TEAMS OF
MERCENARIES APPEAR TO BE FADING, THE MILITANT FLRD EXILES MAY
WELL BE TRYING TO DEVISE WAYS OF INDUCING CONFRONTATIONS

BETWEEN THE USG (AND POSSIBLY OTHER WESTERN POWERS) AND THE PRB, IN THE HOPE THAT SUCH CONFRONTATIONS WILL ADD TO THE REGIME'S DIFFICULTIES, INCREASE SCORN FOR IT ABROAD, ISOLATE IT FROM ITS NEIGHBORS AND DONORS AND THUS CONTRIBUTE TO ITS DOWNFALL. IT WILL BE RECALLED THAT THE RECENT BOGUS ISSUE OF CONFIDENTIAL

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THE GOVT NEWSPAPER EHUZU CALLED ON DONOR GOVTS TO CUT OFF ALL NON-HUMANITARIAN AID TO KEREKOU (COTONOU 1908)

8. SECOND HYPOTHESIS IS THAT SOVIETS OR NORTH KOREANS PERPETRATED THE STUNT. IN VIEW OF SOVIET FORGERIES AND OTHER TRICKS IN PAST, THEY IMMEDIATELY COME TO MIND. WE WOULD HOWEVER EXPECT THEM TO DO A BETTER JOB, EVEN THOUGH THEIR PAST EFFORTS OF THIS TYPE HAVE SOMETIMES BEEN A BIT SLOPPY. THEY MIGHT CONCEIVABLY PULL SUCH A TRICK JUST AS A NUISANCE, TO TIE UP OUR EMBASSY STAFF FOR A CERTAIN PERIOD. NORTH KOREANS MUST BE CREDITED WITH PLENTY OF WILL TO CAUSE US TROUBLE. UNLIKE THE SOVIETS, THEY MIGHT NOT UNDERSTAND THE SPEED OF OUR CAPABILITY TO CHECK OUT NAMES, ADDRESSES AND OTHER PARTICULARS IN AN SOS NOTE. CANNOT EXCLUDE THAT NORTH KOREANS, WITH HELP OF LOCAL FRIENDS IN BENIN AND/OR TOGO, WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS EXERCISE.

9. THIRD SOURCE OF POTENTIAL MISCHIEF-MAKERS TO CONSIDER IS THE GROUP OF STALINIST AND MAOIST INTELLECTUALS WHO SUPPORT LT MARTIN DOHOU AZONHIHO, THE COMMUNIST WHO HOLDS THE TWO PORTFOLIOS OF INTERIOR AND INFORMATION/NATIONAL ORIENTATION. THIS IS THE GROUP NOW DOMINANT IN THE KEREKOU REGIME. ITS ATTITUDE TOWARD THE US IS WARLIKE BUT AS A GROUP IT STILL GENERALLY EXERCISED SOME RESTRAINT IN PUBLIC VIS-A-VIS THE US., PROBABLY BECAUSE THERE IS STILL A MAJORITY IN THE UPPER COUNCILS OF THE REGIME THAT IS CONVINCED THAT CONFRONTATION WITH USG WILL CAUSE RETRENCHMENT OF US AID WHICH THEY CONSIDER ESSENTIAL FOR THE BUILDING OF SOCIALISM IN BENIN. WE SUSPECT HOWEVER THAT SOME OF THE EXTREMISTS WOULD LIKE FOR IDEOLOGICAL REASONS TO CLOBBER THE US., EVEN AT THE RISK OF LOSING OUR AID. AZONHIHO HIMSELF MAY BE OF THIS PERSUASION. NEVERTHELESS ON BALANCE WE DO NOT GIVE MUCH WEIGHT TO THE HYPOTHESIS THAT THIS GROUP TRIED TO "CON" US IN THE PRESENT CASE. THERE ARE EASIER AND MORE EFFECTIVE WAYS FOR THE EXTREMISTS TO CAUSE TROUBLE FOR THE USG IN THE PBR THAN THE LOME HOAX.

10. IN SUCH A CASE A GENEROUS ALLOWANCE SHOULD PERHAPS BE MADE FOR THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE PERPETRATOR IS A PRANKSTER, A NUT OR PERSON/PERSONS HAVING A GRIEVANCE AGAINST THE US OR THE PRB. END COMMENT.

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11. WE WILL CONSULT WITH FRENCH AND WEST GERMAN EMBASSIES, TO
ASCERTAIN WHETHER SIMILAR TRICKS ARE BEING PLAYED ON THEM.

12. WE ARE FORWARDING THE "S.O.S. NOTE" BY NEXT CLASSIFIED
POUCH TO DEPT, FOR POSSIBLE FURTHER ANALYSIS BY DOCUMENT
EXPERTS.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DETENTION, CITIZEN PROTECTION, ESPIONAGE, KIDNAPPING, ARRESTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 DEC 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975COTONO01971
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750448-0256
From: COTONOU
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751210/aaaaaise.tel
Line Count: 288
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
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Reference: 76 NIAMEY 4923, 76 COTONOU 1966, 76 ACCRA 8513, 76 STATE 300747
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Margaret P. Grafeld
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TAGS: CASC, CPRS, PINS, TO, DM
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006